



## FEMA recognizes DEQ, others, for emergency response at Waterford 3 drill in December

A recent letter from Region 6 of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency to the U.S. National Regulatory Commission recognized the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and participating organizations for their concerted efforts in the Waterford 3 Steam Electric Station drill conducted in December 2011. Waterford 3 is located on the banks of the Mississippi River in St. Charles Parish.

Personnel from several DEQ divisions and offices performed various roles during the drill, staffing the Waterford 3 Emergency Operations Facility, a headquarters element, a Joint Information Center and two field monitoring teams. The entities formed DEQ's emergency and radiological response team, which also partnered with several agencies and organizations throughout the drill.

DEQ and the participating organizations were praised for having zero deficiencies and zero plan issues during a post-drill evaluation conducted by FEMA.

Every quarter, Waterford 3 conducts an emergency drill in order to assess and address various emergency scenarios, practice its emergency plan and engage in the coordinated emergency response efforts of several agencies and other responding organizations. The idea is to sharpen the response skills while facilitating a streamlined, concentrated approach to informing the public, containing the emergency and keeping the public safe from environmental and physical harm as it relates to possible exposure to radiation. DEQ also plays a role in drills for the River Bend Station in St. Francisville and the Grand Gulf Nuclear Station in Jackson, Mississippi.

"Based on the results of the exercise, the offsite radiological emergency response plans and preparedness for the W3 and the affected local jurisdictions are deemed adequate to provide reasonable assurance that appropriate measures can be taken to protect the health and safety of the public in the event of a radiological emergency," said Tony Russell, Regional Administrator for FEMA.

"DEQ's performance in this drill is indicative of the serious approach we take for all drills of this nature, as we continually train and put into practice our emergency response mechanism to ensure we are always prepared and equipped to address any offsite impact a nuclear or major electric facility may experience," said Tim Knight, Administrator of DEQ's Assessment Division. "Our emergency and radiological response team, public information staff and environmental monitoring technicians work together to ensure that the public is kept safe and informed should an emergency event occur at any of those sites."

The Waterford 3 drill in December 2011 was based on a scenario involving a coolant leak from the facility, followed by an emergency alert, a subsequent reactor trip, a site area emergency declaration, the simulation of a release into the air from the facility, a general emergency declaration and termination of the exercise. Through each phase, DEQ and its partners are evaluated by FEMA for their performance and conduct in accordance with state and federal regulations governing appropriate action and response to specific scenarios.

During the exercise, DEQ field teams will simulate taking air and vegetation samples which are then measured and analyzed for particulates and radioiodine. During the entire process, field technicians communicate closely with DEQ public information staff as well as partnering agencies and local, parish and state law enforcement to ensure that all responding authorities are on the same page.